

Folk and Popular Culture

Key Issues

1. Where do folk and popular cultures originate and diffuse
2. Why is folk culture clustered?
3. Why is popular culture widely distributed
4. Why does globalization of popular culture cause problems?

Key Issue 1: Where do folk and pop cultures originate and diffuse?

- **Habit-** a repetitive act that a particular individual performs.
- **Custom-** a repetitive act that a particular group performs.
- **Folk culture-** the culture traditionally practiced primarily by small, homogenous groups living in isolated rural areas.
- **Popular culture-** the culture found in large, heterogeneous societies that share certain habits despite differences in other personal characteristics.
- **Material Culture** – the physical objects produced by a culture in order to meet its material needs: food, clothing, shelter, arts, and recreation. Carl Sauer (Berkeley, 1930s – 1970s).

- A social custom originates at a hearth, a center of innovation.
- Folk customs tend to have anonymous sources, from unknown dates, through multiple hearths
- pop culture generally has a known originator, normally from MDC's, and results from more leisure time and more capital.
 - EX: Folk music tells stories or conveys information about daily activities.
 - That terrible polka music you listen to at a family reunion
 - Call out songs from slavery, chariot
 - Pop music is written by specific individuals for the purpose of being sold to a large number of people.
 - TI, 50 Cent, Lady Gaga

- Diffusion of folk and pop culture differs:
 - Folk customs tend to diffuse slowly and then, primarily through physical relocation of individuals.
 - Pop customs tend to diffuse rapidly and primarily through hierarchical diffusion from the nodes. (Certain fads can diffuse contagiously)

- Kabuki-

<http://www.sadlerswells.com/standalonevideo.php?video=/assets/videos/63786503001,47017644001&show=2628&dp=1&show=2628&more=1>

Key Issue 2: Why is folk culture clustered?

- ISOLATION- promotes cultural diversity as a group's unique customs develop over several centuries.
 - Folk culture varies widely from place to place at one time. Since most folk culture deals in some way with the lives and habits of its people, the physical environment in which the people act has a tremendous impact on the culture.

Folk Culture – rapidly changing and/or disappearing throughout much of the world.



Portuguese Fishing Boat



Guatemalan



Turkish Camel Market

- People living in folk culture are likely to be farmers growing their own food, using hand tools and/or animal power.
- Local food preferences are a large part of the folk customs of that region.
 - Pork vs. Beef, Fish vs. Red Meat, Bread, Chicken etc..
- Religious, social, or economic factors often determine the type and amount of food consumed in a given region.

Hog Production and Food Cultures

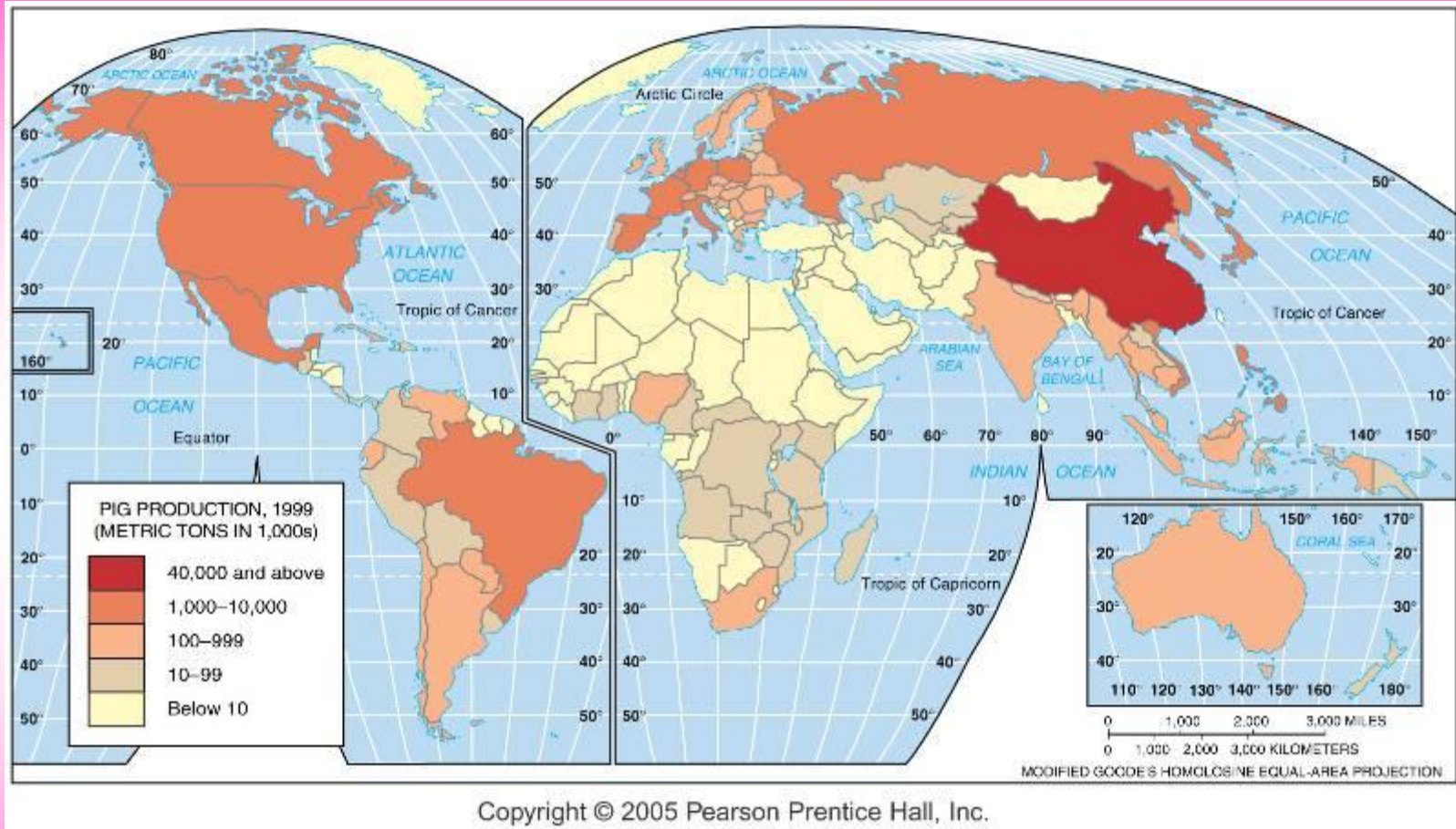


Fig. 4-6: Annual hog production is influenced by religious taboos against pork consumption in Islam and other religions. The highest production is in China, which is largely Buddhist.

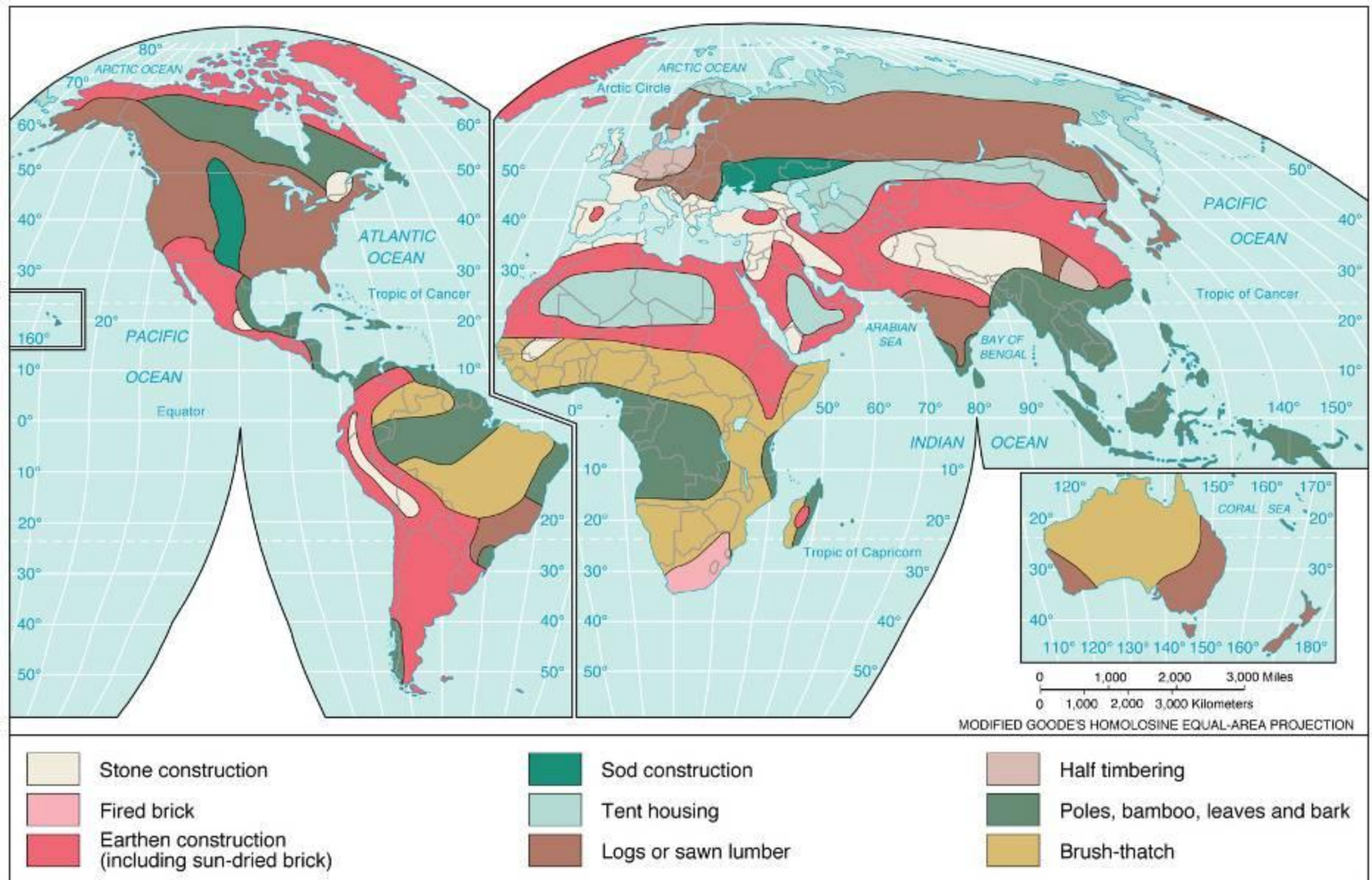
FOLK FOOD

How did such differences develop?



- Housing preference is another major contributor to folk culture. Local traditions, as well as environmental factors determine the type of house that is built in a region.

FOLK ARCHITECTURE



FOLK ARCHITECTURE

Effects on Landscape:

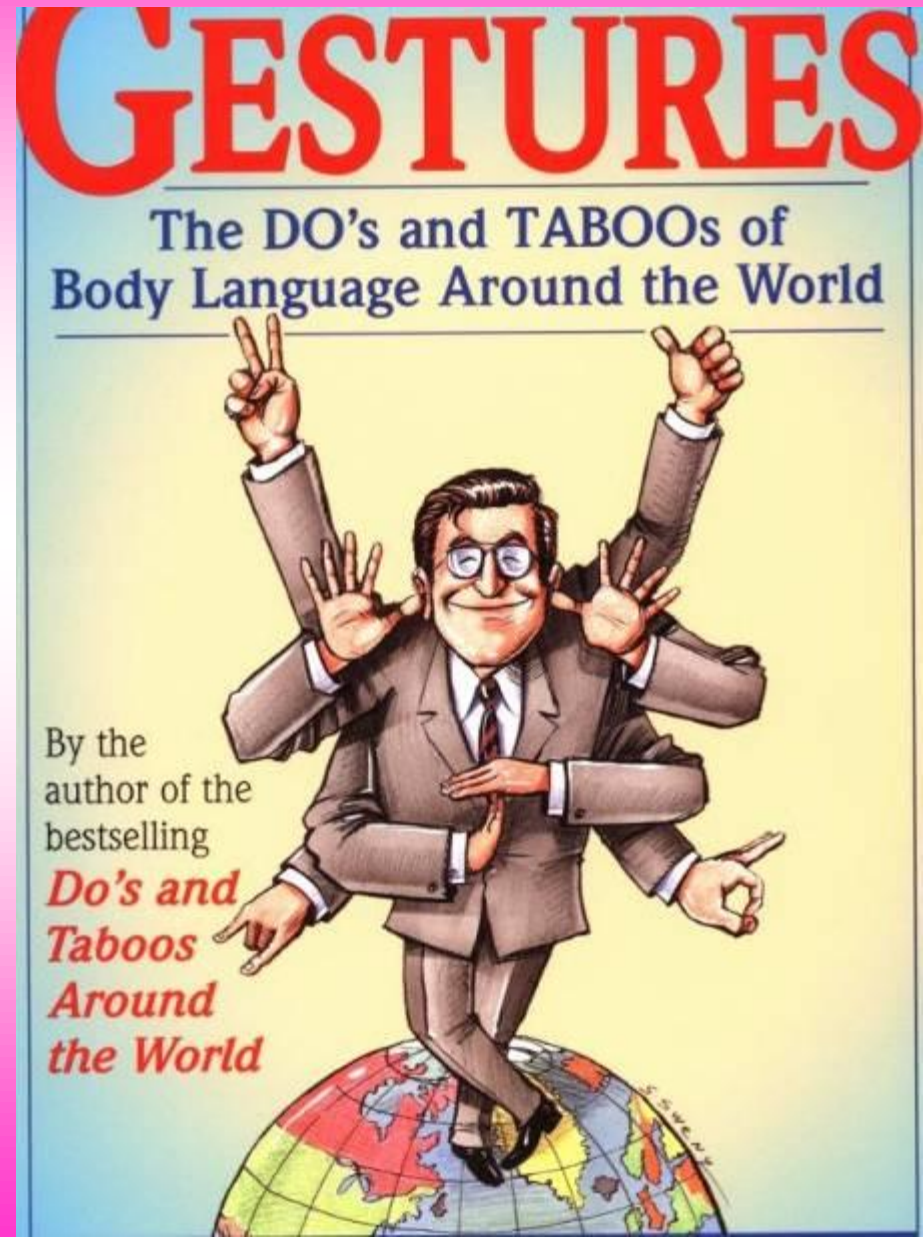
usually of limited scale and scope.

Agricultural: fields, terraces, grain storage

Dwellings: historically created from local materials: wood, brick, stone, skins; often uniquely and traditionally arranged; always functionally tied to physical environment.



- **Taboo** – a restriction on behavior imposed by social custom.
 - Ex: little to no pork is consumed in predominantly Muslim countries.



Food Taboos: Jews – can't eat animals that chew cud, that have cloven feet; can't mix meat and milk, or eat fish lacking fins or scales;

Muslims – no pork;

Hindus – no cows (used for oxen during monsoon)

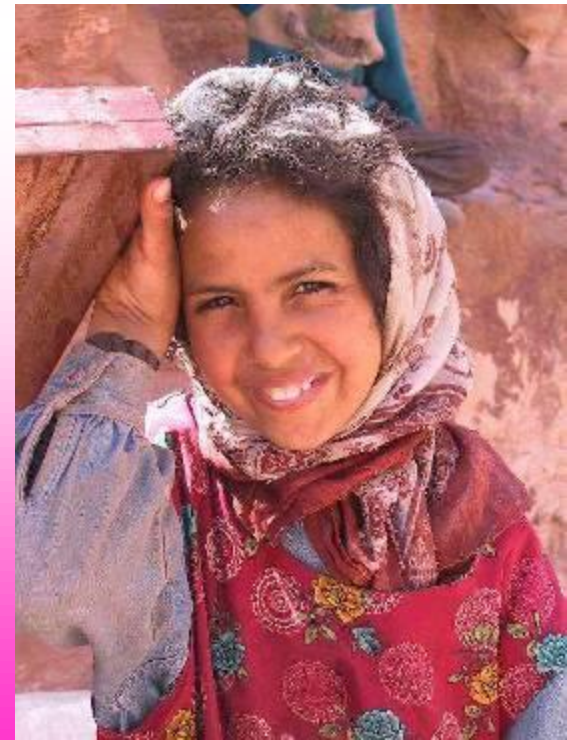
Taboo Project



Washing Cow in Ganges

Folk Culture Review

- Stable and close knit
- Usually a rural community
- Tradition controls
- Resistance to change
- Buildings erected without architect or blueprint using locally available building materials
- anonymous origins, diffuses slowly through migration. Develops over time.
- Clustered distributions: isolation/lack of interaction breed uniqueness and ties to physical environment.





North American Folk Culture Regions

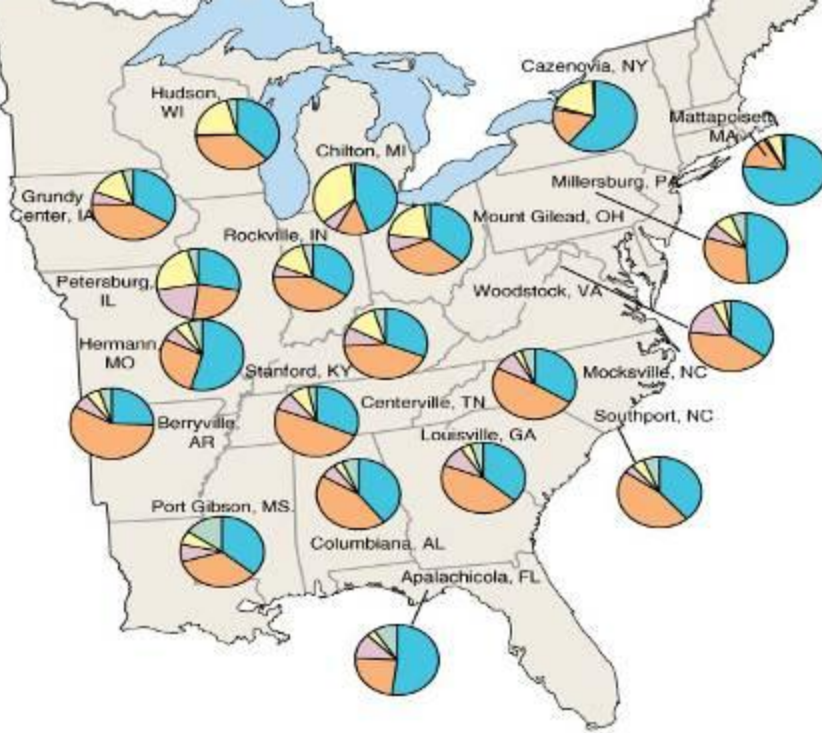
- Québec French
- Acadian French
- Yankee
- Upper Canadian
- Pennsylvanian
- Upland southern
- Mexican
- Highland Hispanic
- Mormon
- Mountain western
- African-American
- Northern Forest Native American
- Southwestern Native American
- Plains ranch
- Ukrainian

Key Issue 3: Why is popular culture widely distributed?

- Pop culture, compared to folk, varies widely from time to time in a given place. This is due to its widespread and rapid diffusion, and the relative wealth of the people to acquire the materials associated with pop culture. Pop culture flourishes where people have sufficient income to acquire the tangible elements of the culture and the leisure time to make use of them.
- Housing in the US, from the 1940's on, has been less dependent on what type of house is appropriate for what site or region, but more on what the dominant trend is in the architectural field at the time of construction.

U.S. House Types by Region

Small towns in different regions of the eastern U.S. have different combinations of five main traditional house types.



Bungalow



Irregular Massed



Double Pile



Single Pile



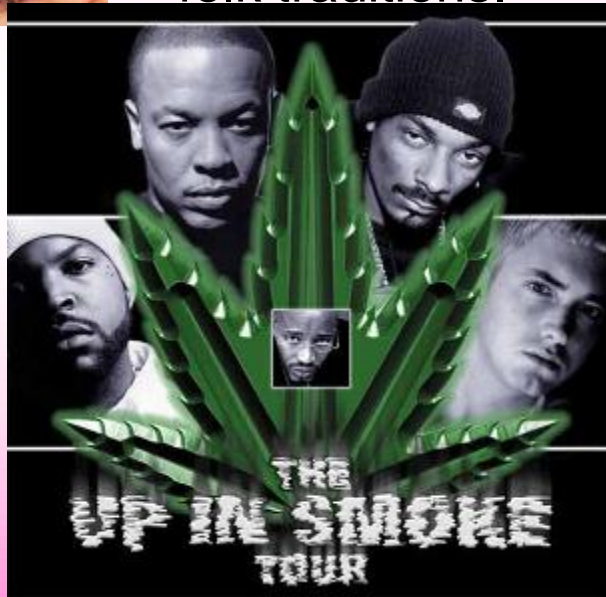
Ranch



- The most prominent example of pop culture in the realm of clothing is the mighty blue jeans. They have become a symbol of youth and “westernization” throughout the world. Many people in foreign countries are willing to depart with a week’s earnings just for a pair of Levi jeans.



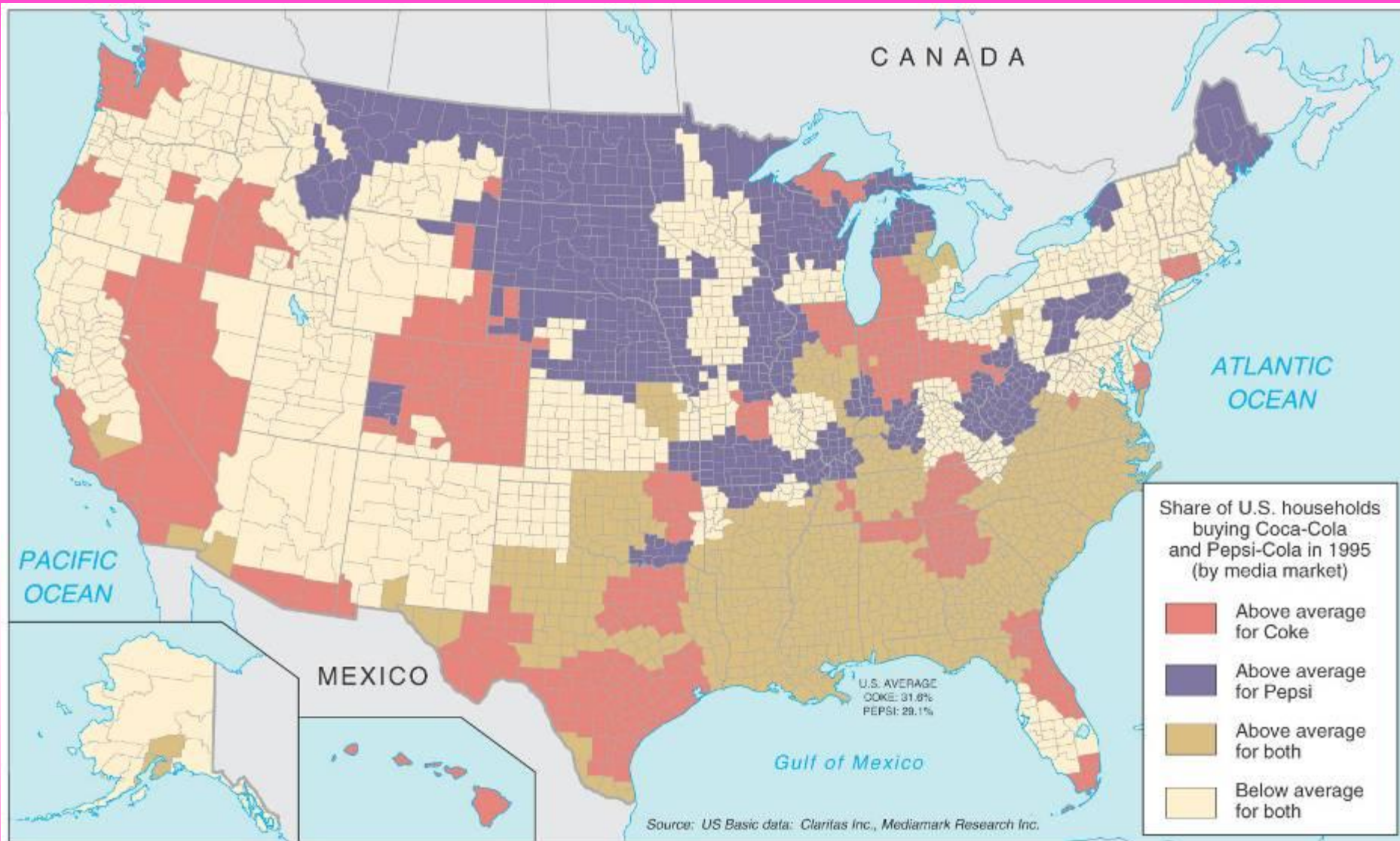
Clothing: Jeans, for example, and have become valuable status symbols in many regions including Asia and Russia despite longstanding folk traditions.



BAYWATCH™



- Food preferences in pop culture depend on high income and national advertising. The spatial distribution of many food or beverage trends are difficult to explain.
- Wine is generally consumed in areas where the vineyards grow best, and where people can afford to drink it.
- Religious taboos often are responsible for certain areas' preference or dislike of specific foods, much as in folk custom.
 - Ex: Wine is rarely consumed outside Christian dominate countries.



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Beijing, China
2004





- TELEVISION IS THE MOST IMPORTANT MECHANISM FOR THE RAPID DIFFUSION OF POP CULTURE. It is also the most popular leisure activity in MDC's throughout the world. There are four levels of television service:
 - Near universal ownership. US, Japan, Europe, etc.
 - Ownership common, but not universal. Latin American countries, etc.
 - Ownership exists, but is not widely diffused. Some African and Asian countries,
 - Very few televisions. Sub-Saharan Africa, some regions of Mid East.

Diffusion of TV, 1954–1999

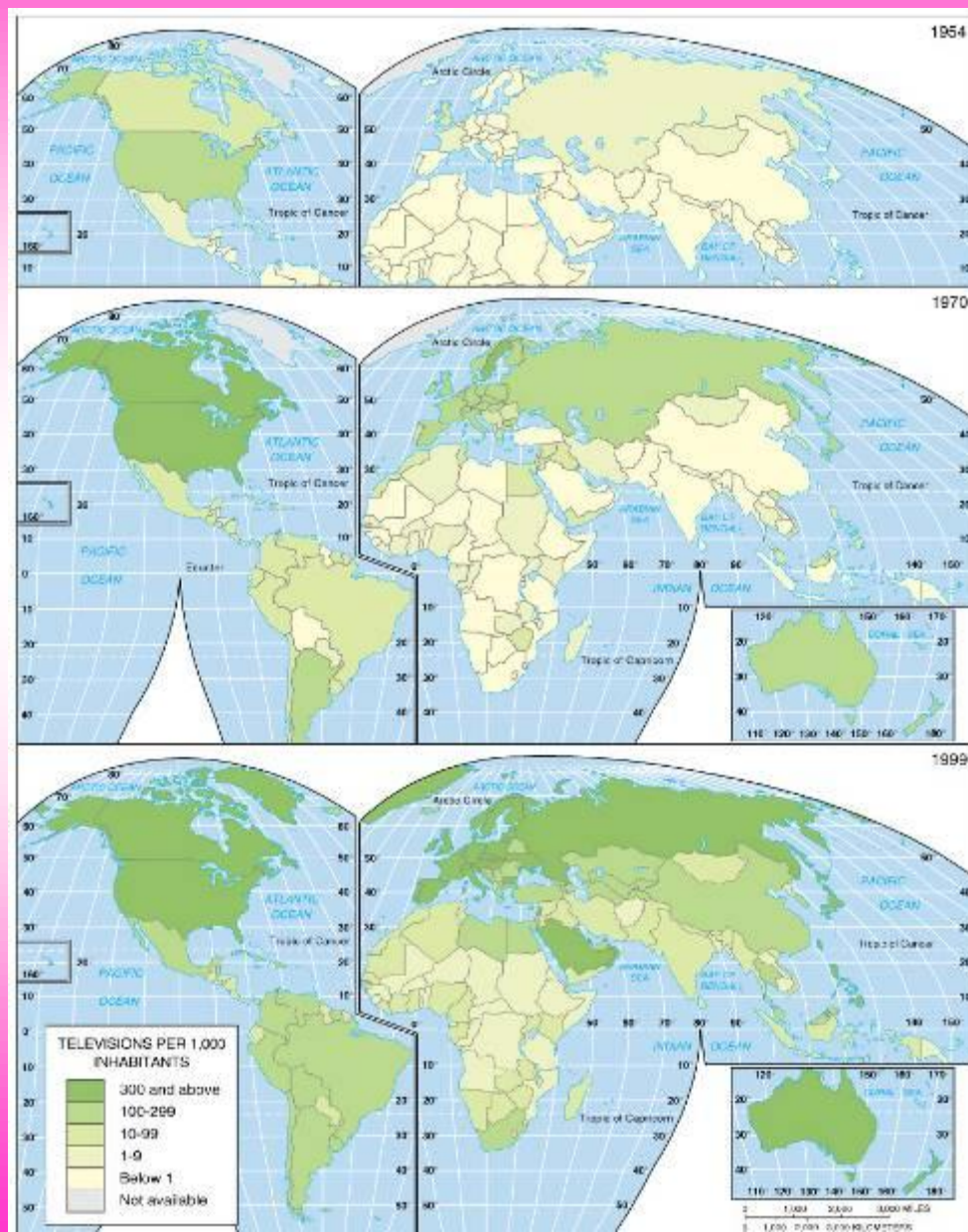
Television has diffused widely since the 1950s, but some areas still have low numbers of TVs per population.

Much media is still state-controlled.

Ten Most Censored Countries:

1. North Korea
2. Myanmar (Burma)
3. Turkmenistan
4. Equatorial Guinea
5. Libya
6. Eritrea
7. Cuba
8. Uzbekistan
9. Syria
10. Belarus

Source: The Committee to Protect Journalists.
www.cpj.org.



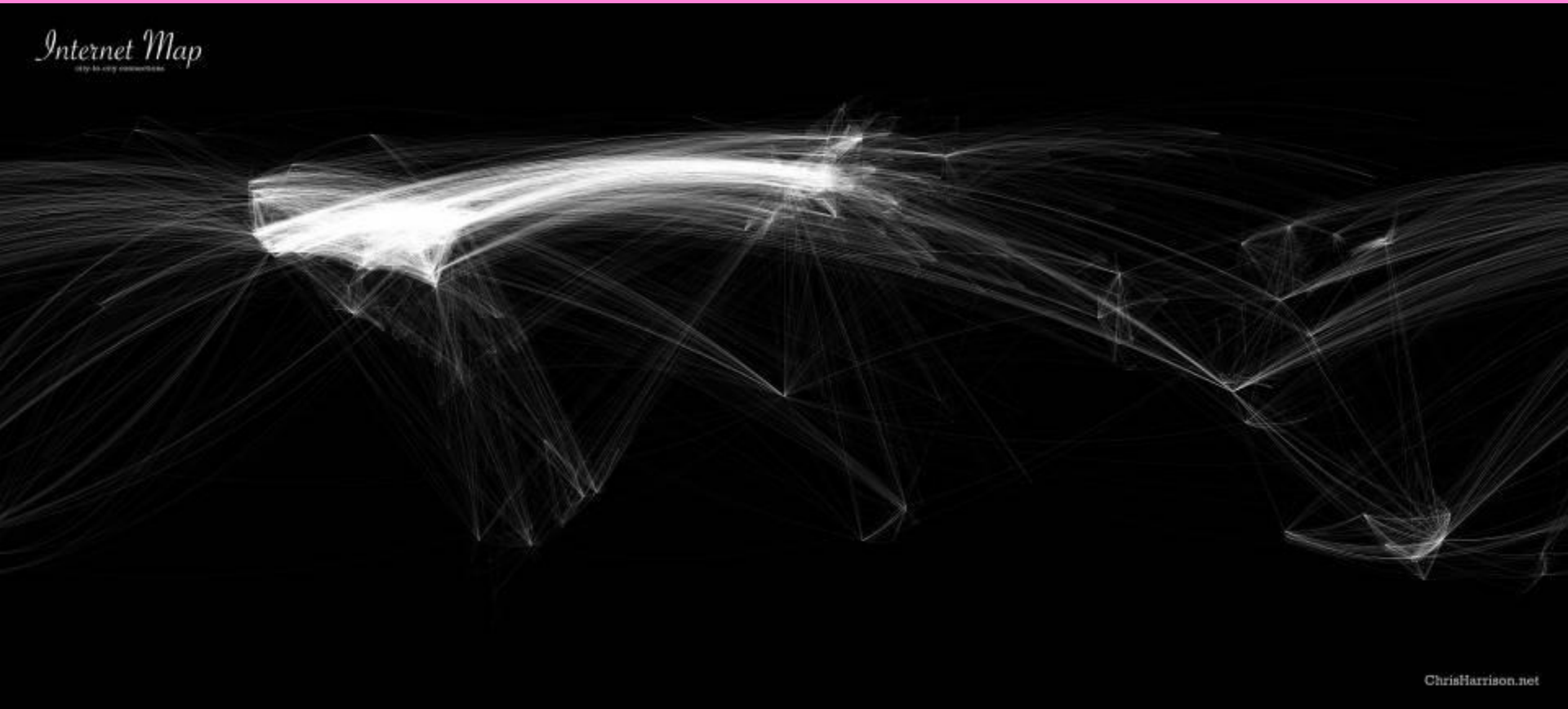
- Diffusion of the Internet is following roughly the same pattern as TV did at the start, which is the U.S. has a disproportionately large share of the Internet hosts compared to its share of the world population. As the Internet increasingly becomes the people's resource of choice, pop culture will have yet another conduit to rapidly and effectively diffuse to nearly every inhabited place on the planet.

Internet Connections



The Internet is diffusing today, but access varies widely.

Internet Connections



The Internet is diffusing today, but access varies widely. Some countries censor the Internet, but this is much harder to do.

- In the U.S., TV stations are typically private enterprises that receive licenses from the government in order to broadcast over a specific frequency.
- Elsewhere in the world, the governments normally control the stations or at least have a board that controls them.
 - This censorship is used to minimize the likelihood that programs hostile to current policies will be broadcast.
- This 1984-esque government regulation has lost some of its strength in recent years however.
 - The main reason is the increased number of small satellite dishes that allow the customer to receive signals from stations based in other countries.
 - Although some countries outlaw the ownership of these dishes, individuals continue to invent new ways to hide the dishes and thus continue to receive their contraband signal.
- How did the internet play a key role in the Iran elections of the past year?

Key Issue 4: Why does globalization of popular culture cause problems?

- DOMINANCE OF WESTERN PERSPECTIVES
- Three MDC's, the U.S., the U.K., and Japan, virtually control the television industry.
 - At least one of the three serves nearly every LDC on Earth.
 - The U.S. serves primarily Latin America
 - the U.K. serves primarily Africa
 - Japan serves mainly S. and E. Asia.
- Many LDC leaders claim that because the “westerners” own nearly all of the TV broadcast within their countries, a fair, unbiased report of local news is not presented. Instead, the media focuses only on sensational, rating-boosting stories.

- ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
- Pop culture is less likely than folk to be considerate of physical features.
 - For many popular customs, the environment is something to be modified to enhance a product or promote its sale.
 - Ex: golf courses, destruction/modification of large expanses of wilderness to promote a popular social custom.
- Quite obvious is the increased need of natural resources to feed the pop culture craze. As a new trend engulfs a population, a specific resource may be required to satisfy the demand, and little care is taken to ensure the preserving of that resource for posterity. This, in turn, can lead to higher pollution levels as a result of pop cultures.

Problems with the Globalization of Culture



Often Destroys Folk Culture – or preserves traditions as museum pieces or tourism gimmicks.

- Mexican Mariachis; Polynesian Navigators; Cruise Line Simulations
- Change in Traditional Roles and Values; Polynesian weight problems



Satellite Television, Baja California

Popular Culture

Effects on Landscape: creates homogenous, “placeless” (Relph, 1976), landscape

- Pop culture also promotes uniformity of landscape, as evidenced by the prevalence of nearly identical fast-food restaurants at convenient stops along highways.
- Complex network of roads and highways
- Commercial Structures tend towards ‘boxes’
- Dwellings may be aesthetically suggestive of older folk traditions
- Planned and Gated Communities more and more common





Surfing at Disney's Orlando Typhoon Lagoon

Are places still tied to local landscapes?

Disconnect with landscape: indoor swimming pools? desert surfing?



Swimming Pool, West
Edmonton Mall, Canada



Dubai's Indoor Ski Resort



Muslim Women in Traditional Dress at
Indoor Ski Resort

Environmental Effects of Globalization

Accelerated Resource Use in Consumer Societies:

- Furs: minx, lynx, jaguar, kangaroo, whale, sea otters (18th Century Russians) fed early fashion trends.
- Aggressive consumerism evident in most Western Media , including hip hop and rock and roll.
- Inefficient over-consumption of Meats (10:1), Poultry (3:1), even Fish (fed other fish and chicken) by meat-eating pop cultures
- New larger housing desires and associated energy and water use.

Pollution:

- Water treatment and improved public health may come with higher incomes.
- However, increased waste and toxins from fuel use, discarded products, plastics, marketing and packaging materials, etc.





Beijing, China



Palm Springs, CA

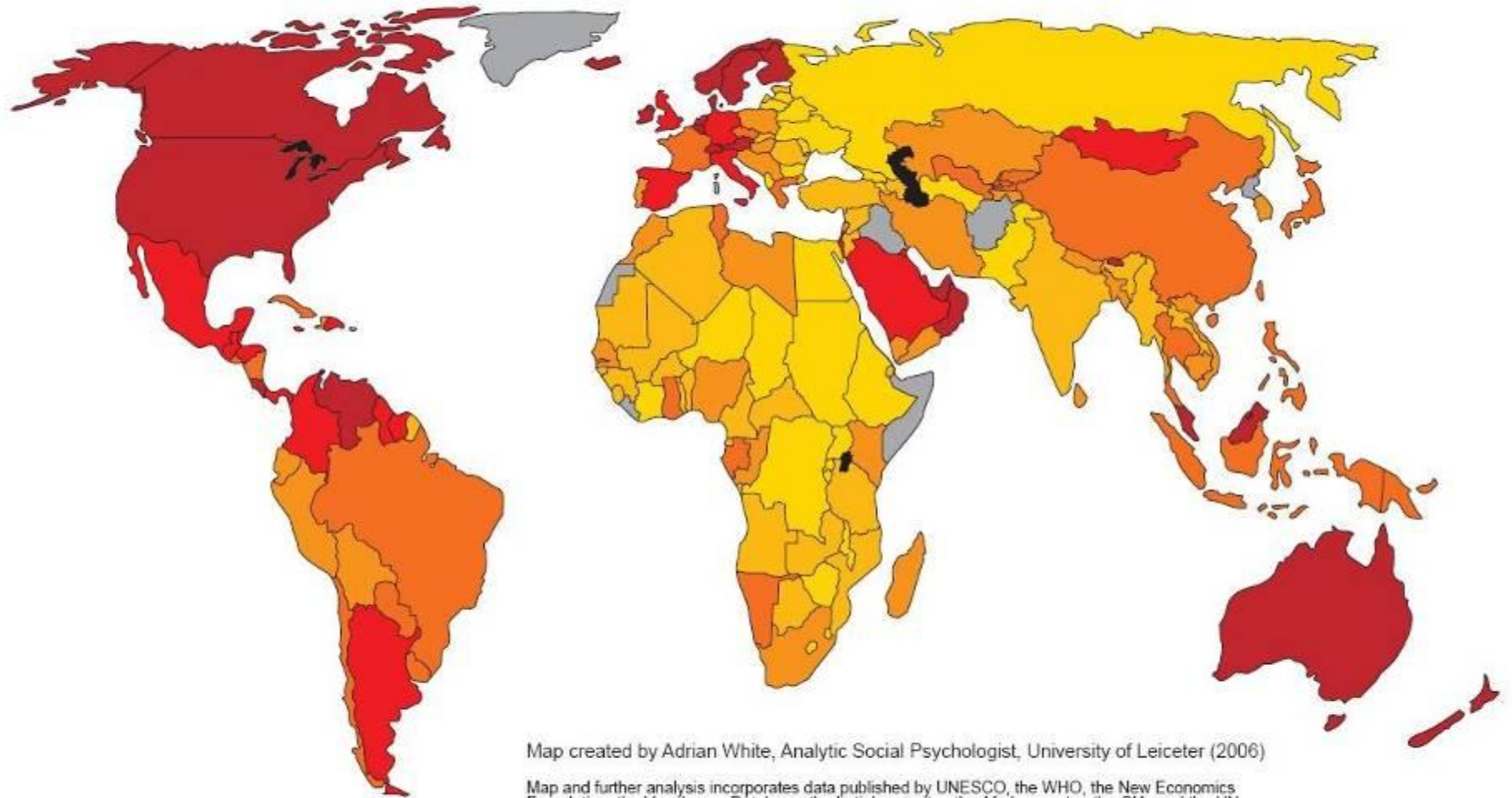
Marlboro Man in Egypt



Benefits of Economic and Cultural Globalization

- Increased economic opportunity?
- Higher standards of living?
- Increased consumer choice
- More political freedom?
- More social freedom?
- Is Globalization good or bad?
 - Explain using the text to back your answers

A Global Projection of Subjective Well-being: The First Published Map of World Happiness

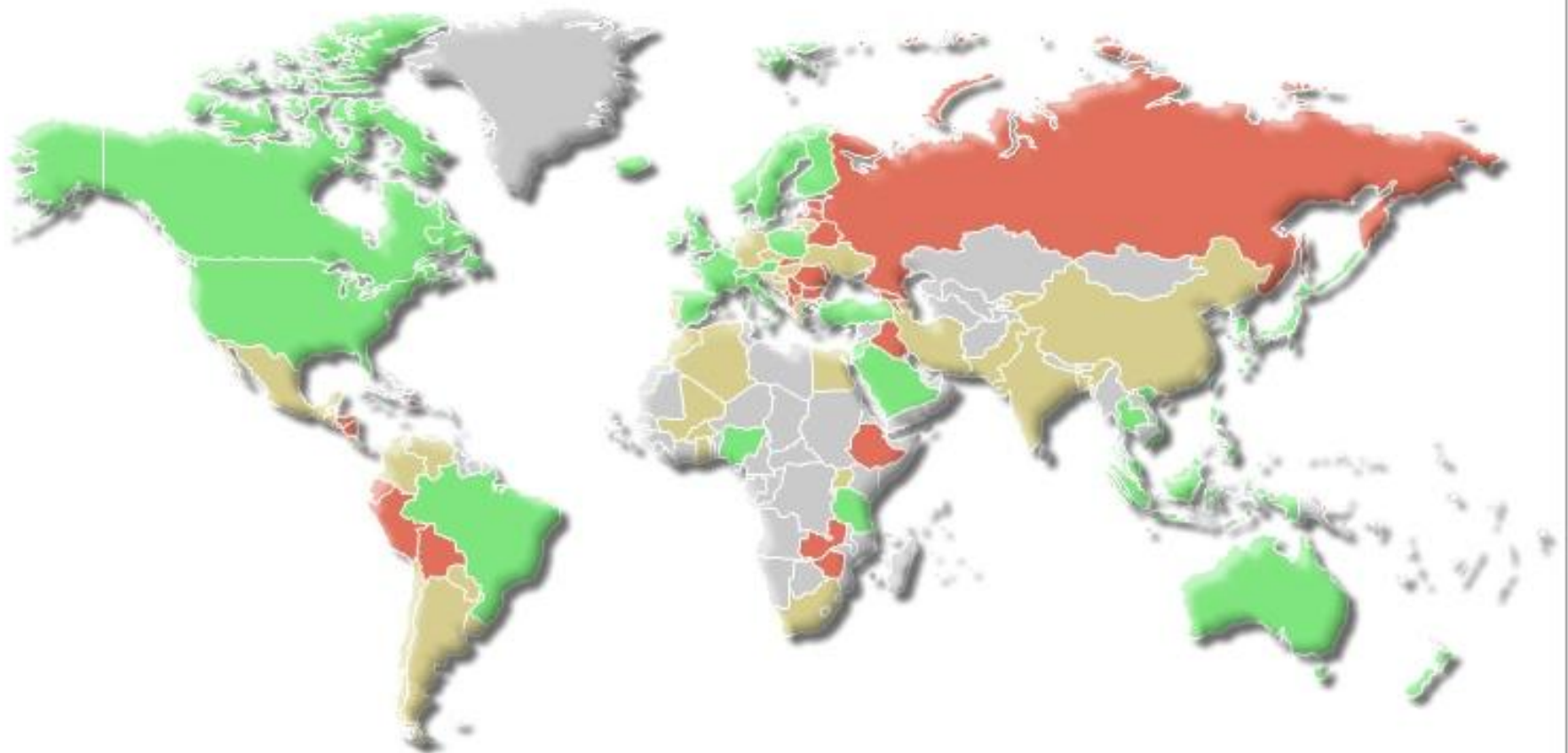


Map created by Adrian White, Analytic Social Psychologist, University of Leicester (2006)

Map and further analysis incorporates data published by UNESCO, the WHO, the New Economics Foundation, the Veenhoven Database, the Latinbarometer, the Afrobarometer, the CIA, and the UN Human Development Report.



Happy ————— Average ————— Unhappy



■ Less happy (Less than 140) ■ Fairly happy (140-170) ■ More happy (More than 170)

World Values Survey

- Rubenstein, James- Cultural Landscape; An Introduction to Human Geography
- http://www.glendale.edu/geo/reed/cultural/cultural_lectures.htm
- <http://www.quia.com/pages/mrsbellaphg.html>
- Google